

February 24, 2015

The Local Early Childhood Council (LECC) for Middletown is looking for your support in co-sponsoring HB 6004, which will help restore the Community Plans and Early Literacy match funds for Discovery Communities. These funds help support current activities of LECC's across Connecticut, who help children prenatally through age 8. Removing these funds in 2015 will derail current efforts underway. Getting systems to work together toward common goals has taken years. The match funds are instrumental in achieving our vision for children to be successful in school, and beyond.

The Graustein Memorial Fund offers Discovery Communities resources to support the infrastructure needed to do invaluable cross agency work for children and families. The Governor's budget which was presented on February 18, 2015 cut the matching funds from the OEC's budget for Community Early Childhood Plans and Early Literacy work. Without these funds, Graustein will not fund communities, which will lead to \$800,000 in funding being lost for mobilizing the cross sector work currently supporting CT's children and families. In Middletown all of the resources work together through the collaborative efforts of the LECC. Without these resources the current plan will fall short of meeting our goal. Please ensure the investments already made achieve the projected results! We have come too far to lose ground now.

In Middletown we are working to get a Social Worker into funded child care programs to: connect families to available community programs; help them get their basic needs met; reduce chronic absenteeism; reduce child care expulsion rates; and ultimately reduce State services costs before children enter Kindergarten. We are also working to ensure children leave community programs connected to schools and ready to learn. With early literacy funds programs receive on-site coaching to strengthen staff capacity to improve literacy experiences for children in their child care learning environments as well as at home. The data from our efforts will be used to inform the budgeting process across partner agencies in the coming years. The LECC has ensured a connection between the Early Care community and public school system, this relationship allows for strong relationships, and continued referrals between all services for children and families.

Thank you on behalf of our Middletown Local Early Childhood Council,

Ed Bonilla, Co-Chair

Alice Torres, Co-Chair